



KENTUCKY SOCIAL WELFARE FOUNDATION

The past year witnessed a growing interest and concern by the Kentucky Social Welfare Foundation (KSWF) in the population of children who have incarcerated parents. National data from Kentucky Youth Advocates' publications indicate that nationwide 8% of children have parents who are incarcerated, while in Kentucky the rate is 15%, or approximately 145,000 children. Fully 60% of those Kentuckians who are incarcerated are parents, with the rate for female inmates being 70.6%. Sadly, Kentucky ranks second highest in the nation in its female imprisonment rate, at 64 per 100,000, with the majority of these women housed in county jails (Blueprint for Kentucky's Children, Kentucky Youth Advocates, February 2018).

There are adverse, real life consequences for children whose parents are incarcerated, affecting multiple aspects of their lives: academic, social, housing, and physical and mental health. According to Maggie Middletown, Program Director of Amachi Central Kentucky, which mentors children with parents who are incarcerated, the youth they serve experience higher rates of mental health, physical health, and economic needs. Middletown also shared that most of the 160 youth actively involved in the program are diagnosed with a mental health disorder such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and/or are struggling with angry outbursts and other symptoms of significant trauma. In addition to these personal struggles most of the children in the Amachi program live in high crime areas, with family income significantly below the poverty level and with little access to mental or physical health care. Additional information is available at Annie E. Casey Foundation (www.aecf.org/resources/a-shared-sentence).

It was with these concerns in mind that the board of directors of KSWF convened a forum of community leaders from across the Commonwealth, with the goal of increasing their knowledge and awareness of the concerns related to children of incarcerated parents. KSWF would like to thank the following individuals for sharing their time and expertise through their participation in the forum on October 1, 2018.

Julie Racque Adams, State Senator, District 36
Terry Brooks, Executive Director, Kentucky Youth Advocates
Dennis Enix, Development & Grants Specialist, YMCA of Greater Louisville
Tara Grieshop-Goodwin, Chief Policy Officer, Kentucky Youth Advocates
Tiffany Cole Hall, Vice President of Addiction Recovery, Volunteers of America, Mid-States
Jennifer Hancock, President/CEO, Volunteers of America, Mid-States
Kerry Mears, Owner & Case Manager, Kentucky Reentry Services
Kelly Pullen, Executive Vice President for Clinical Operations, Home of the Innocents
Terrence Sullivan, JD, Kentucky Youth Advocates
John Tilley, Secretary, Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet
Grant Victor, University of Kentucky, College of Social Work

The goal of the Kentucky Social Welfare Foundation is to better understand the root causes of this social phenomenon, and to empower its grant recipients to address the critical issues necessary to change them, including public policies and programming. We look forward to being at the forefront of addressing the challenges necessary to foster real change to this area.